

Kineleghin
in the parish of Ballinakill
in the barony of Leitrim

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The Knights Hospitallers in Co. Galway.

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Having recently had occasion, in connection with a paper I have had the honour to read before the Royal Irish Academy on “The Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in Ireland,” [1] to consider the extent and location of the possessions of the Knights Hospitallers throughout Ireland, my attention has been directed to the evidence of the association of that great military order with Connaught and more particularly with the County of Galway. The subject is one which has not hitherto been examined with much care, and most antiquaries have been in the habit of accepting without further inquiry the statements on this subject contained in Harris’ “Ware”, and in Archdall’s “Monasticon Hibernicum.” Both of these important authorities are entitled to the greatest respect, but inasmuch as their accounts of the possessions of the Knights Hospitallers in Ireland are neither exhaustive nor in all respects accurate, I have had occasion to inquire with some minuteness into the statements they contain. Among the minor difficulties of this investigation not the least troublesome has been the identification of the place called Kinalekin by Ware in his account of the Monasteries of Ireland in the twenty-sixth chapter of his “Antiquities of Ireland,” and stated to have been the seat of a Preceptory of the Order of Knights Hospitallers. It has occurred to me that it may be of some interest to the members of the Galway Archæological Society to present the results of my researches under this head in somewhat greater detail than was appropriate to the proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy.

In Archdall’s “Monasticon Hibernicum” it is stated that “a commandery for Knights Hospitallers was founded in the 13th century under the invocation of St. John the Baptist,” [2] at Kinalekin in the County Galway. Archdall, on the authority of Allemand, attributes the foundation to an O’Flaherty, and, accepting this assertion as accurate, founds upon it the conjecture that “Kinalekin is probably in Iar-Connaught, of which O’Flaherty was dynast.” Examination, however, revealed the fact that not only was there no authority for this conjecture, but that the name could not be reasonably identified with that of any existing town-land in West Connaught. It accordingly became necessary to look elsewhere. A document printed in “Blake Family Records,” 1st Ser. p. 66, [3] provided me with the required clue. In a power of attorney given in the year 1529, by Sir John Rawson, the last Prior of the Hospital of Kilmainham (which was for more than three centuries the chief seat of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in Ireland) to Stephen Fitzjames Lynch of Galway, mention is made among other property of this Order, of “the tithes of *Kenalaghen* in the Diocese of Clonfert.” In a note to this document Mr. Blake cites from the Haliday Papers [4] a letter dated Nov. 18, 1560, from the Lord Deputy, the Earl of Sussex, and Privy Council of Ireland to the Earl of Clanricard, O’Kelly “captain of his country” and others, directing that a grant be made to one Walter Hope of a lease for a term of years “of certain parcelles of landes lying in Connaughta, belonging to the house of Kylmaynan.” Among the property to be comprised in the lease “the parsonage of *Kynneleghane*” is included. A search in the Elizabethan “Fiants” published in the Reports of the Deputy Keeper of the Records showed that the lease so directed to be given was in fact executed [5] in 1570, when Walter Hope was given a lease of “the rectories of *Kynneleghane*, *Ballenclare*, *Kyltaraughta*, and *Kylvechana* in Connaught, of the possessions of the late priory of St. John of Jerusalem ;[6] while a Further fiant dated 5th Dec, 1578, recited a grant, pursuant to a Queen’s Letter of 27 Sept., 1575, to the Provost, burgesses and commonalty of Athenry in

Connaught" of "the rectory of *Kynneleghane*, Co. Galway, with the tithes of *Kinneleghane* and Barnaboye (the altarages and one cople of the tithes for the curate and for repairing the church excepted)." [7]

The mention of Clanricarde and O'Kelly's country in the letter from Sussex, coupled with the grant to the borough of Athenry in the fiant just quoted, led me to the conclusion that it was in East rather than in West Galway that the original of the Knights Hospitallers house was to be sought, and that the Kinalekin of Ware and Archdall would prove to be identical with the Kynneleighane of their various Elizabethan documents. I accordingly had recourse to O'Donovan's "Tribes and Customs of the District of Hy-Many commonly called O'Kelly's Country." From the map of the territory given in that work, and from a note at p. 15, I found the origin of the reference to the O'Flaherty foundation of Kinalekin on which Archdall has built his mistaken inference. For it appeared from O'Donovan's admirable map that the original O'Flaherty country ran very close to the town of Athenry in days long prior to the coming of the Bourkes. Further though the Townland Index made no mention of Kynnaleighane, it gave three townlands of Barnaboy, the name which is bracketed with Kynnaleighane in the Athenry grant ; and of these one containing 299 acres, 1 rood and 35 perches was given as lying in the Barony of Clare and Parish of Athenry. The reference in O'Donovan's "Hy-Many" having given me the Irish original of Kynneleghane as "Kinal Ffeighin" I next looked up the same scholars "Annals of the Four Masters" under that place name, where I was rewarded by finding the results of my inquiries and conjectures confirmed by the express statement of that really omniscient topographer. For at p. 2230 O'Donovan notes as follows :—"Kinal Ffeighin from KinalEghin—this is the Monastery called Kinalekin by Archdall, who erroneously places it in O'Flaherty's country. It is more correctly called Kinaleghin in an inquisition dated 22 April, 1636, which places it in Clanricarde. The ruins of the Abbey which are of considerable extent are situated in the parish of Ballinakill, barony of Leitrim, and County of Galway, about 3½ miles to the north-east of the village of Woodford (near Eagle Hill). The Abbey Church measures 124 feet in length. There are within it many curious monuments to members of the Bourke family." A detailed description of these remains, and a fuller statement of the facts upon which O'Donovan's note is founded are given in the Ordnance Survey Papers preserved in the Royal Irish Academy, vol. ii., p. 504. [8] The identification of Kinalekin with Kinal Ffeighin is accordingly complete. I give in an Appendix the documents referred to above, in the hope that some member of the Society may be able to supply information concerning various rectories and other property enumerated as having been among the possessions of the Knights Hospitallers.

It is somewhat curious that Hardiman in his "History of Galway" makes no direct mention of the Hospitallers as connected with the city. But in a reference to the Templars he writes as follows : — "This famous order had a convent here beyond the east gate, but it was suppressed in 1312, and its possessions granted by Edward II to the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem. The circular foundation of this ancient building may be seen marked on the old map of the town, at the S. W. corner of the Green." [9] The house thus described by Hardiman as a "convent" was evidently one of the "guest houses" or inns which both Templars and Hospitallers were licensed to establish in the principal cities, and which formed an interesting feature in the social life of mediæval Ireland.

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APPENDIX.

(1). “ Kinalekin ; Commandery : A commandery for Knights Hospitallers was founded here in the 13th century under the invocation of St. John the Baptist by O’Flaherty ; Kinalekin is probably in Iar-Connaught, of which O’Flaherty was dynast.

We find that John was prior in the year 1310 ; when Joan, the widow of John de Burgh, sued him as custos of his lands, etc., for her dower thereof.

John de Blohely was prior ; he was succeeded by a third John, who sued John de Burgh for a townland in Tullagh Mc Roskyn, of which John O’Lean who was consecrated Bishop of Clonfert in the year 1322, and died A.D. had unlawfully diseized John de Blohely, predeces-sor of John the present prior.

A Franciscan friary was founded here before the year 1825.”

(Archdall’s *Monasticon Hibernicum*. Ed. Card. Moran, ii p. 221.)

(2). “ Power of Attorney given by Sir John Rawson, Knight, Prior of the Hospital of Kylmaynan, near Dublin, of St. John of Jerusalem, in Ireland, to Stephen Fitz James Lynch, of Galway, merchant. The donor thereby gave said attorney power to grant leases of all the lands, tithes, oblations and altarages belonging to the said Hospital in any part whatsoever of Connaught, and especially the tithes of the ecclesiastical parishes of Ballyclare and Kiltarragh in the Diocese of Tuam, the town of Clonmakany near Ballyclare, the tithes of Kenaleghen in the Diocese of Clonfert, and the chapel and house of St. John the Baptist of Ballyne-robe, with a carucate of land and one mill there ; with power to collect the rents and profits thereof, and hold the same to the use of the said Prior and Hospital, the power to con-tinue for the period of two years from the date thereof. Attested under the writing and signat-ure of the underwritten public notary. Dated at the chief house of Kilmaynan near Dublin, of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in Ireland, July 22, A.D. 1529. Witnesses : Father Richard Ellercare, Prebendary of Castroknoke, and Steward of Kilmaynan, and Robert North. Attestation of Nicholas Bennett of the Diocese of Ferus, public notary. Signed Nicholas Bennett, notary.”

Blake Family Records, 1st Series p 66, Record No 86.

(3) “ By the lorde lieutenant and counsaill

T. Sussex.

We grete you well ; and whereas upon sute made to the quenes majastie by Walter Hope, it was her highnes pleasure that he shulde have in lease for terme of years certain parceiles of landes lyeing in Connaughta, belonging to the house of Kylmaynan, nowe annexed to her majasties crowne imperiall, videlicet, the tounne of St. John’s of Randone with the appurtenances ; the parsonage of Ballanclare, the house of Cloune Machanyn, the parsonage of Kynneleghin, the parsonage of Kyltaraughta and Kilvekena, the house of St. John’s in Gallwaye, with all their appurtenances, in consideracion that he hath revealed and brought to light the saide landes heretofore concealed and not aunswered to her highnes or her progenitours.

We lett you witt that because presently we cannot take ordre for the survey thereof, we are contented and pleased that the said Walter Hope shall have holde and enjoye the saide parceiles of landes with their appurtenances with all profittes and commodities belonging to the same during our further pleasure for the which he shall answeere rent to her majestie ac-cording to suche survey as shal be made thereof.

Wherefore we chardge and commannd as well all such as be occupiers and inhabitors of the saide landes to permitt and suffre him quietly without any your lettes or impedimentes peasibly to enjoye the same ; as also all other her highnes officers mynisters and loving sub-jects to be aiding and assisting to put him in possession thereof and to maynetayne him therein till our further pleasure be known.

Given at Laughlin, the xviiiith 1560.

H. Dublin, cane.—W. Fitzwilliams—John Plunket—James Bathe—John Travers — Thomas Lokwood, dean—Francis Agarde—John Chaloner.

To our verie good lorde the Erie of Clanricarde ; O’Kelle, capitain of his countrey ; the Mayor of Galwaye, and all other her majesties officers, mynisters, and loving subjects, to whom it shall appertayne.” Haliday MSS. *15th Report of Hist. MSS. Commission, App. Part II*, p. 113.

(4) Letter of English Privy Council to Sir Henry Sydney.

“ After our right heartie commendacions : We have received your letterres of the 26th of May, fourth of June, touching two severall sutes made unto you there by Walter Hope of Dublin, the one for the obtaining of a pencion granted unto him of late years by Oswald Mass higher do, late pryor of Kylmaynehame, for service done unto the said pryor and house, as he alleagath For answer unto bothe which sutes you shall understande that like as in the fyrste we think it very resaonable yf in the acte of parlyament made for the uniting of the landes and possessions of the said house of Kylmaynehame [to] the crowne there be any suche clause or provision as he alleagath for the allowing of all these grauntes that passed bona fide from the said pryor before the dyssolucion of the said house, and that it shall also appere unto you that the graunt passed unto him for his said pencion ys of that nature, and made bona fide, without fraude or covyn, and further that the landes granted unto him in Connaght by a concordatum of our very good lorde the earl of Sussex, and the counsell then being, were not allotted unto him in recompence of his said pencion, but for other respectes and consyderacions, that then he be allowed his pencion according to equitie and justice, together with the arrerages due unto him upon the same.

And so we byd you right hartily well to fare. From St. James, the secondo of July, 1566.”

Holiday MSS. loc. cit. p. 189.

(5) Lease under commission 26 Sept ix to Walter Hoppe, of Molynger, Co. Westmeath, of the rectories of Kynnaleighen, Ballenclare, Kyltaraghta. and Kylveckana in Connaught, of the possessions of the late priory of S. John of Jerusalem. To hold for 21 years, rent 28. 4. Not to alien without License. Fine 28. 4—5 Dec. xiii. *Fiant Elizabeth No. 1639. App. to 12th Report of Deputy Keeper of Irish Records p 21.*

6 Grant (under Queen's letter 27 Sept., xvii) to the provost burgesses and commonalty of Athenry in Connaught of the rectory of Kynnaleighane, Co. Galway, with the tithes of Kinnaleighane and Barneboye (the altarages and one cople of the tithes for the curate and for repairing the church excepted) the rectory of Ballenclare, same co., with the tithes of Ballenclare, Lisharroll, and Lydeacan (the altarages and two copies of grain for the curate and for repairing the church excepted), the rectory of Kiltaraghta, same co (the altarages and one cople of tithes for the curate and for repairing the church excepted) the rectory of Kilveckana, same co., (the altarages and one cople of tithes for the curate and for repairing the church excepted) possessions of the late hospital of S. John of JerUfftem in Inland. To hold for ever, in free socage. Rent (of them and all other lands) £26 12 0. 20 Aug, xx.

Fiant Elizabeth, No. 3419. (Appendix to 13th Report of Deputy Keeper of Irish Records, p 94.)

[1] See Royal Irish Academy Proceedings, Vol. xxvi., Section C.

[2] Card. Moran's edition vol. ii., p 221. See Appendix (1).

[3] See Appendix (2).

[4] Hist. MSS. Comm., 15th Report, App. Part III.p 113. See Appendix (3).

[5] Letter of the English Privy Council to Sir Henry Sydney. Appendix (4)

[6] *Fiant Elizabeth*, No. 1680. See Appendix (5).

[7] *Fiant Elizabeth*, No. 3419. See Appendix (6).

[8] O'Donovan's description of the place and its remains is in full agreement with a careful inspection of the ruins recently made by Mr. J. M. Bradshaw on my behalf. Mr. Bradshaw writes as follows : — 'About eight miles west of Portumna you will see printed on the one inch map (Survey) a place called "Abbey" with "Friary" beside it. This is the place. I visited them to-day, and called at the adjoining National School, over which is the inscription "Abbey of Kilnalahan," and so the people pronounce the name, but far off are the ruins of a smaller monastery called "Lahin" and I believe there is a holy well (St. Brigid's). The ruins are extensive and in a very fair state of preservation,—several Churches or Shrines, in one of which is a striking tomb with original altar. I was informed that one of the Irish princes is buried in this corner, and that the graveyard is still used for purposes of burial. I should have noted that it is the burial place of the Bourkes.'

[9] Hardiman's History of the Town of Galway, p. 274.

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